

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

House and Senate met in a Joint Meeting to receive His Excellency Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1833–S1957

Measures Introduced: Eleven bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 857–867, and S. Res. 111–115. **Page S1891**

Measures Reported:

Special Report entitled “History, Jurisdiction, and a Summary of Activities of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources during the 113th Congress”. (S. Rept. No. 114–6) **Page S1891**

Measures Passed:

National Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 115, designating April 2015 as “National Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Month”. **Page S1957**

Measures Considered:

BUDGET RESOLUTION—AGREEMENT: Senate continued consideration of S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S1835–86**

Adopted:

Burr Amendment No. 622, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to manageable Federal student loan repayment options. **Pages S1838–39, S1842**

By a unanimous vote of 99 yeas (Vote No. 87), Stabenow Amendment No. 755, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to keeping the Federal Water Pollution Control Act focused on protection of water quality, to establish bright lines for Federal jurisdiction, and to create clear and unambiguous exemptions for features that the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency or

the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, claim they are not seeking to regulate. **Pages S1845–46, S1868–69**

By 59 yeas to 40 nays (Vote No. 88), Barrasso Amendment No. 347, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund to keep the Federal Water Pollution Control Act focused on protection of water quality, to establish bright lines for Federal jurisdiction, and to create clear and unambiguous exemptions for features that the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency or the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, claim they are not seeking to regulate. **Pages S1836–38, S1869–70**

Hatch Amendment No. 796, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to saving Medicare. **Pages S1853–56, S1870**

By a unanimous vote of 99 yeas (Vote No. 92), Cotton Amendment No. 481, to establish a deficit-neutral fund relating to supporting Israel. **Pages S1871–72**

Rejected:

By 46 yeas to 53 nays (Vote No. 86), Reed (for Warren) Amendment No. 652, to make college more affordable for middle-class families by allowing borrowers with outstanding Federal and private student loans to refinance at the equivalent interest rates that were offered to Federal student loan borrowers during the 2013–2014 school year and to fully offset the cost of such a program by requiring millionaires to pay at least a 30 percent effective Federal tax rate. **Pages S1839–44**

By 49 yeas to 50 nays (Vote No. 89), Sanders/Whitehouse Modified Amendment No. 777, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to recognize that climate change is real and caused by human activity and that Congress needs to take action to cut carbon pollution. **Pages S1847–48, S1862–63, S1870**

By 46 yeas to 53 nays (Vote No. 91), Murray Amendment No. 801, to build on the Bipartisan

Budget Act of 2013 by restoring a below-sequester level cut of \$9,000,000,000 to nondefense discretionary spending in 2017, replacing sequestration in 2016 and 2017 and increasing funding above sequester levels by a total of \$148,000,000,000 for the 2 years, increasing defense and nondefense discretionary spending above sequester levels by equal amounts, eliminating the overseas contingency operations gimmick contained in the committee-reported resolution, and offsetting the net increase in defense and nondefense discretionary spending by closing tax loopholes. **Pages S1863–64, S1871**

Withdrawn:

Blunt/Thune Amendment No. 350, to create a point of order against legislation that would create a Federal tax or fee on carbon emissions. **Pages S1846–47, S1868**

Pending:

Enzi (for Kirk) Amendment No. 545, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to reimposing waived sanctions and imposing new sanctions against Iran for violations of the Joint Plan of Action or a comprehensive nuclear agreement. **Page S1865**

Rounds/Inhofe Amendment No. 412, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service from engaging in closed-door settlement agreements that ignore impacted States and counties. **Page S1835**

Rubio Modified Amendment No. 423, to increase new budget authority fiscal years 2016 and 2017 and modify outlays for fiscal years 2016 through 2022 for National Defense (budget function 050). **Page S1835**

Daines Amendment No. 388, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the designation of national monuments. **Pages S1865–66**

Daines Amendment No. 389, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to holding Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives accountable for failing to pass a balanced budget. **Page S1885**

Moran Amendment No. 356, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing health care to veterans who reside more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides the care sought by the veteran. **Pages S1848–53**

Roberts/Flake Amendment No. 352, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to Federal employee performance awards. **Pages S1856–57**

Roberts Amendment No. 462, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to over-the-counter medications. **Page S1857**

Vitter Amendment No. 515, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to requiring the

Federal Government to allow states to opt out of Common Core without penalty. **Pages S1857–58**

Vitter Amendment No. 811, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ending Washington's illegal exemption from Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. **Pages S1858–60**

Gardner Amendment No. 443, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting privately held water rights and permits. **Page S1862**

Coats/Warner Amendment No. 595, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to improve cybersecurity. **Page S1864**

Coats Amendment No. 368, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing States the Medicaid flexibility they need to implement innovative reforms to improve care and enhance access for our Nation's most vulnerable. **Pages S1864–65**

Daines Amendment No. 465, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to Second Amendment rights. **Page S1866**

Daines Amendment No. 387, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to postal reform. **Pages S1866–68**

Wyden/Crapo Amendment No. 434, to provide for an adjustment to committee allocations for wildfire suppression funding. **Page S1868**

Paul Amendment No. 940, to increase new budget authority for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 and modify outlays for fiscal years 2016 through 2022 for National Defense (budget function 050) with offsets. **Pages S1872–73**

Sanders (for Murray/Alexander) Amendment No. 697, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund for legislation that reforms and strengthens elementary and secondary education. **Page S1873**

Sanders (for Murray) Amendment No. 798, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund for legislation to allow Americans to earn paid sick time. **Page S1873**

Sanders (for Cantwell) Amendment No. 800, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to a comprehensive approach to crude-by-rail safety. **Page S1873**

Sanders (for Murray) Amendment No. 812, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide women with affordable access to comprehensive health care, including preventative services (such as contraception and breast cancer screenings), improve maternal health, and ensure that a woman has the same benefits and services no matter what part of the United States she lives in, all of which is critical to improving the health and well-being of women, children, their families, and society as a whole, and is an essential part of a woman's economic security and opportunity. **Page S1873**

Sanders (for Murray) Amendment No. 951, to establish and fund a new Federal-State partnership to expand access to high-quality preschool programs for children from low-and moderate-income families, offset with revenue from closing loopholes.

Pages S1873–74

Sanders (for Durbin/Coons) Amendment No. 345, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing funding for Federal investments in biomedical and basic scientific research.

Pages S1873–74

Sanders (for Durbin) Amendment No. 817, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide tax benefits to patriot employers that invest in American jobs and provide fair pay and benefits to workers and to eliminate tax benefits for corporations that ship jobs or profits overseas.

Pages S1873–74

McCain/Flake Amendment No. 360, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to deterring the migration of unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Page S1874

Wyden/Bennet Amendment No. 708, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to simplifying and expanding tax incentives for higher education to boost student attendance and completion.

Pages S1874–75

Wyden Amendment No. 791, to strike reconciliation instructions to the Committees on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and Finance and require regular order.

Page S1875

Wyden Amendment No. 870, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to extending tax provisions expiring in 2013 or 2014 for 2 years, such as those contained in the EXPIRE Act of 2014.

Page S1875

Heller Amendment No. 453, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that the Secretary of Transportation prioritizes the construction of projects that are of national and regional significance and projects in high priority corridors on the National Highway System, which will improve the safe, secure, and efficient movement of people and goods through the United States and facilitate economic development and create jobs in the United States.

Page S1875

Heller Amendment No. 452, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that the Secretary of the Interior enters into candidate conservation agreements with each of the relevant 11 Western States before the United States Fish and Wildlife Service makes a listing determination on the greater sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Page S1875

Heller Amendment No. 457, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibition of Veterans Benefits Administration executive bonuses

until the backlog of disability claims for veterans is eliminated.

Pages S1875–76

Heller Amendment No. 456, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs meet the privacy, dignity, and safety needs of women veterans.

Pages S1875–77

Coons/Bennet Amendment No. 343, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to preserving mandatory appropriations for agricultural conservation programs.

Pages S1877, S1882

Coons Amendment No. 391, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the expansion of access to the income tax credit for employee health insurance expenses of small employers.

Pages S1877, S1881–82

Coons/Rubio Amendment No. 392, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting the use of college savings accounts while students are in elementary school and secondary school.

Pages S1877, S1882

Coons Amendment No. 394, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to special treatment of the income tax credit for research expenditures for startup companies.

Pages S1877, S1882

Coons Amendment No. 802, to offset the costs of the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Page S1877

Baldwin Amendment No. 432, to provide additional resources to create the opportunity for more Americans to obtain a higher education and advanced job skills by supporting two free years of community college paid for by raising revenue through requiring millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share.

Pages S1877–78

Baldwin Amendment No. 436, to preserve the point of order against the reconciliation legislation that would increase the deficit or reduce a surplus.

Page S1878

Manchin Amendment No. 694, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to investing in advanced fossil energy technology research and development.

Page S1878

Manchin Amendment No. 578, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to addressing methamphetamine abuse in the United States.

Pages S1878–79

Whitehouse Amendment No. 700, to ensure high-income earners pay a fair share in taxes and to use the revenue to invest in repairing our Nation's bridges, coastal infrastructure, and damage from wildfires.

Page S1879

Whitehouse/Udall Amendment No. 867, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to making it more difficult for corporations and billionaires to

secretly influence elections by making unlimited undisclosed campaign expenditures, and to prevent such entities from evading campaign finance law, including through making false statements to government agencies. **Page S1879**

Whitehouse Amendment No. 895, to prohibit budget resolutions that support cutting over \$1,000,000,000,000 in spending without identifying specific programmatic effects. **Page S1879**

Casey Amendment No. 632, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers. **Pages S1879–80**

Casey Amendment No. 633, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to enhancing the child and dependent care tax credit. **Page S1880**

Merkley/Coons Amendment No. 842, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to consumer financial protection. **Page S1880**

Merkley Amendment No. 843, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to restoring reductions in the Republican budget to the Stafford loan program that would mandate that students currently in college pay interest on their loans before they have received their education benefits, to make college more affordable, to reduce the debt burden of students, and to help graduates afford to pay back student loans. **Page S1880**

Merkley/Brown Amendment No. 952, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to establishing a more level playing field in trade agreements. **Page S1880**

Merkley Amendment No. 953, to save student financial aid and reduce the student loan debt levels in the Republican budget by 15 percent by eliminating new mandated interest charged while students are still in school. **Pages S1880–81**

Blumenthal Amendment No. 825, to expand the deficit-neutral reserve fund for veterans and servicemembers. **Page S1881**

Cassidy Amendment No. 341, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to the promotion of United States offshore energy production. **Page S1882**

Cassidy Amendment No. 539, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving Medicaid based on successful and bipartisan State demonstration projects. **Page S1882**

Cassidy Amendment No. 795, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to authorizing Federal permitting for manufacturing and energy construction projects relating to national primary or secondary ambient air quality standard for ozone lower than a certain existing standard. **Pages S1882–83**

Coons (for Bennet) Amendment No. 715, to create clean energy jobs through predictable and fair incentives for renewable energy. **Page S1883**

Murkowski (for Thune) Amendment No. 607, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to allow for the permanent elimination of the Federal estate tax. **Page S1883**

Murkowski (for Thune) Amendment No. 743, to reduce funding for the General Services Administration by \$1,000,000 until 50 percent of counties in nonattainment for the 1997 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone as of January 30, 2015, achieve the air quality standard set forth in the 1997 NAAQS, and direct those funds to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of helping municipalities reach attainment with the 2008 NAAQS for ground-level ozone, acknowledging that (1) given limited State and Federal resources and the delay of the Administrator in issuing to States implementation guidance for the 2008 ground-level ozone NAAQS, priority should be given to achieving the 2008 standard, (2) the Administrator has not sufficiently implemented that standard, (3) focusing by the Administrator on the most polluted areas that are in nonattainment with that standard would benefit public health, and (4) promulgating a lower standard at this time would impose undue costs on the economy and workforce of the United States. **Page S1883**

Murkowski/Sullivan Amendment No. 838, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to the disposal of certain Federal land. **Pages S1883–84**

Murkowski Amendment No. 770, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the construction of Arctic polar icebreakers. **Pages S1883–85**

Gardner (for Ayotte) Amendment No. 485, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide equity in the tax treatment of public safety officer death benefits. **Page S1885**

Gardner (for Ayotte) Amendment No. 490, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to address the disproportionate regulatory burdens on community bankers. **Page S1885**

Gardner (for Ayotte) Amendment No. 852, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing small business regulatory relief and preventing duplicative regulations for investment advisors. **Pages S1885–86**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 46 yeas to 53 nays (Vote No. 90), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to waive all applicable budgetary discipline pursuant to Section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of

1974, with respect to Stabenow (for Bennet) Amendment No. 601, to create a point of order against legislation that would privatize Medicare, cut guaranteed benefits, increase out-of-pocket spending, or turn Medicare into a premium support plan. Subsequently, the point of order that the amendment was in violation of section 305(b)(2) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, was sustained, and the amendment was ruled out of order. **Pages S1844–45, S1870–71**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the concurrent resolution at approximately 9:30 a.m., on Thursday, March 26, 2015; and that all debate time on the concurrent resolution be considered expired at 12 noon. **Page S1957**

Appointments:

Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: The Chair announced, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, pursuant to Public Law 101–509, the reappointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: Dr. Steven Zink of Nevada.

Page S1957

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Jeffrey Michael Prieto, of California, to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture.

Kathleen Ann Doherty, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus.

Hans G. Klemm, of Michigan, to be Ambassador to Romania.

Lucy Tamlyn, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Benin.

1 Army nomination in the rank of general.

Routine lists in the Army and Navy. **Page S1957**

Messages from the House: **Page S1890**

Measures Referred: **Page S1891**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S1891**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1891–94**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1894–95**

Additional Statements: **Page S1890**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S1895–S1956**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S1956–57**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S1957**

Record Votes: Seven record votes were taken today. (Total—92) **Page S1842–43, S1869–72**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 8:08 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 26, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the

remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1957.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: THE DEFENSE HEALTH PROGRAM

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Defense Health Program, after receiving testimony from Lieutenant General Patricia Horoho, Surgeon General of the Army, Vice Admiral Matthew Nathan, Surgeon General of the Navy, Lieutenant General Thomas Travis, Surgeon General of the Air Force, and Chris Miller, Program Executive Officer, Defense Health Management Systems, all of the Department of Defense.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Energy, after receiving testimony from Ernest J. Moniz, Secretary, and Franklin Orr, Under Secretary for Science and Energy, both of the Department of Energy.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on SeaPower concluded a hearing to examine Navy and Marine Corps aviation programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from Vice Admiral Paul A. Grockl, USN, Principal Military Deputy, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisitions, Lieutenant General Jon M. Davis, USMC, Deputy Commandant for Aviation, and Rear Admiral Michael C. Manazir, USN, Director, Air Warfare (OPNAV N98), all of the Department of Defense.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support concluded a hearing to examine the current state of readiness of U.S. forces in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from General Daniel B. Allyn, USA, Vice Chief of Staff, Admiral Michelle J. Howard, USN, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, General John M. Paxton, Jr., USMC,